



2019 Brock International
Prize in Education Nominee

Scarlett Lewis

Nominated by Jennifer M. Miles

Nomination Portfolio for the
2019 Brock International Prize in Education

Scarlett Lewis

Founder of the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement



Prepared by
Jennifer M. Miles
Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
Mississippi University for Women

Nomination Narrative

Scarlett Lewis' six-year-old son, Jesse Lewis, was murdered in his classroom at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012. Jesse Lewis was a hero. When the shooter paused briefly during the massacre, Jesse yelled to other students to run. Jesse's actions saved lives. As Jesse demonstrated unfathomable courage that day, Scarlett has chosen to show courage every day, and to find a way to prevent such horrific tragedies from occurring.

Scarlett chose to forgive her son's murderer and she chose to find a way to keep others from experiencing such devastation in the future. She didn't want any other children, educators, or families to suffer. As she reflected on what led her son's murderer to walk into Sandy Hook elementary school and shoot students and teachers, she thought about what happened in his life, and in the lives of others who engage in acts of cruelty and violence. She wanted to find a way to teach children how to be compassionate, confident, and resilient, instead of living with pain, isolation, and hate. She chose to find a way to prevent individuals from growing up to believe an act of violence was the only solution.

Scarlett worked with a group of educators to explore what can be done in classrooms to encourage children to be self-confident, empathetic, and caring. The program that was developed is the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement. The Movement is based on the understanding that when children are taught to give and receive love, they won't cause harm and they will help create a peaceful society. The Choose Love Enrichment Program is a pre-K through 12th grade, evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) classroom program that teaches children how to choose love. The program is based on four core values, including courage, gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion.

Scarlett's journey to forgiveness, and the impact of the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement, can be found in the following videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpGPKquVn8c>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c22KiY5orRk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElaQj0KfUYM#action=share>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_lfLTUY3bg#action=share

The curriculum of the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Program is based on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and includes character education, positive psychology, mindfulness, neuroscience, and emotional intelligence. The program can be used in elementary, middle, and high schools. The curriculum is available at no cost. The Jesse Lewis Choose Love Program has been downloaded in all 50 states, plus Washington, DC, and in more than 55 countries.

The Brock International Prize in Education was created to recognize an individual whose innovation has the potential to significantly impact society for the better. Scarlett Lewis has dedicated her life to preventing unspeakable tragedies. She travels the country meeting with educators, students, and parents to share the message of choosing love. Scarlett has committed herself to providing children with the tools needed to grow into confident, compassionate, resilient individuals who treat others, and themselves, with respect and dignity. The Jesse Lewis Choose Love Program provides children with the skills they need to develop into individuals who want to contribute positively to their communities. Thousands of children's lives have been touched by Scarlett's work, and those children, and more, are going to have brighter futures because of her. I am honored to nominate Scarlett Lewis for the Brock Prize.

Letters of Recommendation



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
UNITED STATES SENATOR

July 3, 2018

Brock International Prize Selection Committee
c/o Dr. Jennifer M. Miles

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing in support of Scarlett Lewis for the Brock International Prize in Education.

Ms. Lewis, a Connecticut resident, started the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement to help schools foster environments that teach the importance of giving and receiving gratitude and compassion rather than anger and hatred in order to promote peace and understanding. The organization is named after her son, Jesse, who lost his life in the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Driven by the idea that learning kindness and forgiveness will enable children to thrive at school and to treat each other positively, Choose Love offers classrooms free resources that use the ideas of social and emotional learning (SEL). Choose Love is currently implemented at public schools in all fifty states and in fifty-five other countries, setting the groundwork for a more cohesive and amicable future across the globe.

A leading voice on the significance of SEL, Ms. Lewis worked to help me pass nationwide reform included in the Every Child Achieves Act, which gives teachers the tools to help their students identify and manage their emotions, make responsible decisions, and achieve positive goals with their interpersonal relationships. SEL is an essential step in protecting students' mental health; thanks to Ms. Lewis, Choose Love is applying this model to do vital work to put an end to violence and create peace through education.

I was able to visit programs in Norwich and Stamford that apply the Choose Love formula to their classrooms, and it was evident how the students were benefitting mentally, academically, and socially from this initiative. Choose Love is the type of innovative progress we need to make our world more communicative and peaceful for generations to come.

I strongly urge your favorable consideration of Ms. Lewis as the 2019 laureate.

Sincerely,

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

June 14, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

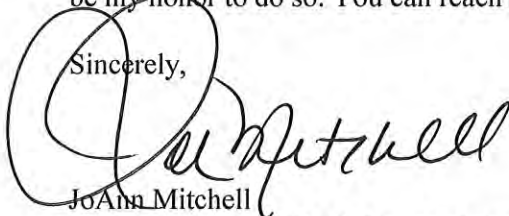
Please accept this letter as a letter of support for Scarlett Lewis's nomination for the Brock Prize for her work with the Choose Love Movement. I had the pleasure of being introduced to Ms. Lewis about four years ago and what an honor it was! At our school, we had already been working on social emotional learning and Scarlett's work significantly enhanced our endeavors.

To understand her impact, it might help to understand our school, our student demographic, and our school mission. We are a K-12 charter school located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We serve a student population comprised of the following demographic: 85% of our students are minority students, 80% of our students live in poverty based on free/reduced lunch counts, 22% of our students are English language learners, and 18% of our students our students with disabilities. On average, our graduating senior class is comprised of 50% of students who are first generation high school graduates and 90% who will be first generation college graduates. Our mission at MAS Charter School is to provide equity through high quality education, where we prepare *all* students for the opportunity to attend and complete college. Additionally, we understand the importance of ensuring that students are not only academically prepared, but socially and emotionally prepared, and have embraced the principles of personal success needed to experience success and happiness in their lives. We strongly believe that academic skills alone will not ensure student happiness and success, but instead, students must be explicitly taught principles of personal success, and Scarlett's work allowed us to deepen this component of our work.

Scarlett has graciously provided her time and energy by sharing her story and her work with schools around the world, including MAS Charter School. Scarlett's work has significantly enhanced our efforts toward social emotional learning at MAS. Scarlett's dedication to ensuring that we support students in schools by Choosing Love is timely and necessary in schools across our country. As an educator, I value student academic performance, especially for underserved students, because I believe in equity through education. With that said, I also know, through personal experience, that academics alone are not enough and Scarlett's work supports schools by providing the missing piece to supporting students, staff, families, and the community. Choose Love has significantly improved our work at MAS Charter School. We are an "A" rated charter school in New Mexico and one of only 14% of schools in our state with this grade. We are also one of the very few schools in the state with this grade that serves our student population. While our school grade is based on the academic performance and academic growth of our students and speaks volumes of our success, I can also tell you we are able to focus on teaching at MAS, instead of behavior, because MAS Chooses Love.

I understand that the Brock International Prize in Education is awarded annually and recognizes individuals who have made a specific innovation or contribution resulting in a significant impact on the practice or understanding of the field of education. I cannot think of a more deserving recipient. Education cannot be just about learning core subject matter...we fail students when we fail to educate the whole child, and Scarlett's work has provided schools the resources to do this. If I can provide any other information to support Scarlett's nomination, it would be my honor to do so. You can reach me at 505-417-3646 or via email at joann.mitchell@mascharterschool.com.

Sincerely,



JoAnn Mitchell
Principal/Founder MAS Charter School



ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

CHALLENGING MINDS, INSPIRING HEARTS. FOR STUDENTS IN PRE-K TO GRADE 8

139 West Rocks Road
Norwalk, Connecticut 06851

May 29, 2018

Brock Prize Selection Committee
c/o Dr. Jennifer Miles
Vice President for Student Affairs
Mississippi University for Women

It is my honor to recommend Scarlett Lewis for the Brock Prize.

Five years ago, Scarlett's son Jesse was murdered in the Sandy Hook tragedy. It is beyond most parent's comprehension how a Mom of a first-grade child could bear the pain of losing an "amazing child, full of life and love that was unmistakable in his presence. Jesse died bravely trying to lead other children to safety."

After months of grieving, Scarlett Lewis 'cut the umbilical cord of vengeance' and forgave the man who shot her son. Instead Scarlett found solace and positive answer to the rest of her life through what she calls "Post-Traumatic Growth". The morning of Jesse's death he wrote "Nurturing- Healing- Love" on a blackboard in his home. Scarlett and a committee of educators since then have translated those words into Courage-Gratitude-Forgiveness and Compassion in Action which is now the **Choose Love** individual units for Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 Social Emotional Learning curricular program active in classrooms in 50 States and 55 countries.

Scarlett Lewis grew up in Darien Connecticut and the residents generously fundraised monies to initiate the first writing of Choose Love by 'educators for educators.' A parent unit has since been written; all units can be downloaded for free on-line.

David Lewis, Scarlett's Dad, visited All Saints Catholic School in Norwalk to record student assessments of Choose Love. Six 8th grade female students formed the *Choose Love Creators* to initially create monthly Choose Love calendars which visually reminded 500 students of the SEL self-awareness and self-management skills which is taught at all grade level Choose Love classes. The group told Mr. Lewis:

- "It has impacted me greatly. It took me out of a situation where I felt uncomfortable and had little self-esteem"

- “We are spreading kindness and love throughout the school. This group also enables all of us to love ourselves and others.”
- “This Choose Love program taught me, personally, how to be a leader, and how to make appropriate decisions as the head of a group of my peers. Now I know how to accept responsibility, but at the same time not abuse power.”
- “Choose Love has taught all of us to be better members of a community. Even though our group has been through some ups and some downs, we were able to stay united as one big group. We’ve had each other for support and help when we need anything, and we know that in the group, there is always someone to talk to. Choose Love is a place for all of the girls to feel safe and comfortable.”

5th grade students who wrote compositions for a Quinnipiac University Choose Love celebration with Senator Blumenthal shared thoughts of the positive influences Choose Love has brought to them. As a final assessment of Choose Love program Mr. Lewis agreed to visit a 7th grade science/stem class and ask students to share their thoughts; the essence of what four girls and two boys shared:

- When we were in grades 4/5, students had a hard time connecting and making friends; we ultimately did not get along with each other. The Choose Love program instituted in grades 6/7 has bound us together as a grade 7 community where each of us respects and are friends with each other.

Scarlett Lewis has found the ultimate remedy to establishing world Peace and Love it so desperately needs. Scarlett brought this message to Darien, Norwalk, Connecticut & every other state, countries beyond the US, personally to Senator Blumenthal, former President Obama and President Trump advisors...Ask any student in any grade if she is special...in Norwalk they would respond as they have with hugs!

Sincerely,

John Cook, Science STEM Teacher ASCS/ Professor University of Bridgeport

203-232-8001 Cell

mr.cook@ascs.net



Stephanie Taira

National Board Certified Teacher

Ka'elepulu Elementary School
530 Keolu Drive Kailua, HI 96734



July 10, 2018

Dr. Michael T. Miller
Dean and Henry Hotz Endowed Chair
Professor, Higher Education
College of Education and Health Professions
University of Arkansas
323 Graduate Education Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701
(479) 575-3208

Dear Dr. Miller:

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Ms. Scarlett Lewis for the Brock International Prize in Education. Ms. Lewis exemplifies the Brock International Prize in Education's belief that "the most important thing we do in life is to educate the next generation in order to build a better future for all." Ms. Lewis endured a parent's horrific nightmare of losing a child, but instead of allowing it to defeat her she turned her story into a positive by creating a comprehensive preK-12 social emotional learning curriculum to help to prevent this from ever happening again. This curriculum will help the next generation to build a better world.

The Jesse Lewis Choose Love Social Emotional Learning Curriculum helps teachers embed social emotional learning into their everyday conversations, lessons, and life. This program changes the way we teach and allows educators to focus on relationships within the classroom while continuing to teach the standards. Our children face situations that no child should have to face – abandonment, parental substance abuse, hunger, neglect, terminal illness, homelessness, etc. – and they need the skills to face these challenges. With the tools that Choose Love gives them, students learn to overcome these outside challenges and focus on the learning that takes place within the classroom.

One of the reasons this curriculum will change the world is that it is personal and creates connections within the classroom. It gives children permission to ask questions and have serious conversations. Our children don't just accept the way we do things but they have the courage (and permission) to ask for explanations. As an educator, using this curriculum provides the time I need to attend to the emotional needs of my students while teaching the Common Core standards. I consider the Jesse Lewis Choose Love curriculum the glue that connects all of the current educational trends that administration is quick to adopt. Mindfulness, Growth Mindset, Inquiry, etc. are all important within the classroom but they tend to stand-alone and its effectiveness is diminished. As we connect these topics with Choose Love, the learning is deep and everlasting.

Ms. Lewis used what she learned from her personal experience to create these lessons not only for educators to teach but as a way for educators to help themselves. The professional development (and continued support) that I received from Ms. Lewis was the best professional development that I have ever had. Imagine creating professional development that the entire staff looks forward to, adopts, and discusses through the year - that is what Ms. Lewis has done. As a



faculty, we have common understanding, common strategies, and common vocabulary that unite us and maintain our focus for our students. This professional development has changed the way I look at the challenges that I face and has changed my life. It helps me to forgive people who have hurt me and has given me permission to cut the cord that in the past has tied me down. By learning to do this for myself, I am able to help my students to do the same.

I have embedded these strategies into my everyday procedures. We take Brave Breaths several times a day. When a child is having a meltdown, he/she immediately knows to take a Brave Breath. As I counsel children, the focus is on what the child can do because we can't control what happens to us but we can control how we react to what happens. Thanks to this curriculum and training, I am able to help my students without the fear of hurting them more. In the past, I was afraid of creating more hurt than benefit with the words that I used. Now I can help the children to focus on facing their challenges with courage, by expressing their gratitude for what they have, forgiving others, and showing compassion in action. They use this formula to Choose Love every day.

Ms. Lewis not only created this curriculum, with the help of experts, it is provided to schools and individuals at no cost. She has shown courage by sharing her personal tragedy and honoring her son Jesse through her presentations. She has taught us how to forgive and be grateful because she has forgiven and is grateful for what she has. Most importantly, she exemplifies compassion in action through this curriculum. Every day, Ms. Lewis overcomes her personal tragedy and chooses love, and by doing this, she is a fantastic example of how the Choose Love formula works and why it will change the world and help to create a peaceful, empathetic place to live. This is why I strongly recommend Scarlett Lewis for the Brock International Prize in Education.

Respectfully yours,

Stephanie K. Taira
National Board Certified Teacher



"Proud Past - Proud Future"

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in support of the nomination of Scarlett Lewis for the Brock International Prize of Education. I met Scarlett two years ago when our school was given the opportunity to pilot the Choose Love Enrichment Program and since then our school, the lives of our students and my own personal and professional life has been impacted.

Scarlett's passion and dedication to make a change in the lives of education and for the human race was quickly apparent after our first conversation. As an educator for the past 18 years I have had many people approach me about programs and ideas to improve the lives of the children who attend out school, but this was the first time that I felt actually moved by a conversation and dedicated to bringing it to my students. Her respect for educators and the field of education was apparent as well as her knowledge about how she could bring about change with her program. One thing that will always stand out to me is how humble she is, making it always clear that it is the people teaching the curriculum that are so important and how the Choose Love Program is always looking for ways to provide teacher and schools the resources necessary for best practices of the program to occur and ultimately to change the lives of the children who participate.

Scarlett is always reaching out, providing support, and creating positive energy to not just our school but many other schools and districts in our area and beyond. The time and energy she puts into parent information meetings, staff professional development, one on one meetings with school administrators continues to astound me. Where does she get her energy and willingness to work this hard to help this program spread throughout the world? She radiates passion for children and teaching children the social and emotional skills necessary to help them make loving choices over angry choices.

The program itself is amazing. And I do not use that word lightly. As I began the lessons with our Washington children two years ago I could see in their eyes and their enthusiasm that they wanted to "choose love". Children will continue to bicker and argue and make choices that make their teachers and parents cringe, but with these valuable lessons learned through the choose love program they have begun to grow and change as little humans. The children tell me often that they are "choosing love" or "trying their hardest to choose love". Parents come to me and tell me that their children are helping them take brave breaths when they are angry. Children who have graduated from Washington continue to use the choose love ideas and language in our community by working with the community organizations to create choose love yard signs. Although these are just a few anecdotal stories, I promise you there are people all over this town and I can imagine in many towns throughout the country who have been affected by Scarlett's passion and program and see choosing love as a way to change our world.

Lastly I would like to talk about two very important aspects of the Choose Love program in relation to Scarlett. First, this program is free to educators. This in itself has meaning. Any teacher, school counselor, parent can have access and use these lessons. This is not a program or person trying to make money off of our society's need for a social emotional curriculum within our schools. This is a person who wants to provide a needed curriculum to schools so never again will a mother have to endure what Scarlett has had to endure as a parent of a murdered child. It is through these lessons that I believe she hopes to give to children the skills necessary to make it through whatever uncomfortable or difficult situation and come out the other side without hurting themselves or others.

Washington Elementary School

Ashley McLarty, Principal

425 North Highland Ave. • Fayetteville Arkansas 72701 • Phone: (479)444-3073 • Fax:(479) 527-3617

Second, this is an actual curriculum with specific lessons that are scripted for all grades. Any teacher can use these lessons to teach these skills without the need for content knowledge. Many teachers who are excellent in their field who can teach children to read, understand force of motion and how to do long division do not feel comfortable teaching social and emotional skills. These lessons make it easy and they can learn themselves right along with the children. As a school counselor who has taught these lessons for two years, it is natural for me, it is my field, for classroom teachers it is new territory and these lessons make it an easy transition. Here you have a person who has seen the need for this type of program and through her determination and passion has made it happen. This is truly amazing to me, and after almost two decades as an educator not many things amaze me.

My hope is that through my words you will have a better understanding that Scarlett is deserving of this award is so many ways. I cannot speak for her, but I can imagine that to her the best award would be that every school in the world taught these lessons and utilized her program. Having this recognition might help this happen. Please let me know if I can give any more information or evidence in support of Scarlett and the Choose Love Program. I can be reached by email at tara.lechtenberger@g.fayar.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tara', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Tara Lechtenberger

School Counselor

Dear Brock International Prize Selection Committee,

It is with immense honor that I offer this letter of recommendation on behalf of Scarlett Lewis, a woman who has dramatically improved the trajectory of countless children's school experiences in the short amount of the time that the Choose Love Enrichment program has been written and offered for free to all educators. Without a doubt, her work will transform the school experiences of countless more children through not only explicit teaching and learning of the Choose Love Enrichment program, but through the ripple effect, as well. My name is Erin Birden and I am a grade 2 classroom teacher in a public elementary school in Connecticut. I was a piloting educator for the Choose Love Enrichment program and continue to implement the program currently. I am a doctoral candidate at Western Connecticut State University in the Instructional Leadership program and have collaborated with Scarlett Lewis and her team for two years.

It was a sunny day in August 2016 when I officially met Scarlett Lewis. I was in attendance at her annual, free Choose Love conference for any and all educators. The room was filled with educators from Connecticut and surrounding states, all eager to listen to the many, varied, beautiful speakers that Scarlett had curated. The conference was mindfully scheduled just before the start of a new school year. Attendee seats were stacked high with free resources and books Scarlett had procured. Scarlett then shared her story, and Jesse's story, the birthplace of the Choose Love movement. In her talk, Scarlett recounted her personal journey towards choosing love with vulnerability and poise. She also shared the many and miraculous events, collaborations, and support systems that led to the equation for choosing love and ultimately, the writing of the program. After hearing Scarlett speak, there is only one thing left to do, and that is to be part of the change.

Scarlett Lewis is a changemaker who mobilizes at the community level and invites participation and insights with sincerity. Scarlett's vision for the Choose Love movement in the enrichment program has been executed with expertise through a drafting process involving practicing educators and experts in the field, a formal pilot process with pre and post surveys and instrument validation, and continuous, substantive revisions based on systematic feedback from all educators. The momentous achievement of offering a meaningful, free PreK-12 differentiated, user-friendly, social-emotional learning program that is easily downloaded and accessed from anywhere must be recognized and uplifted.

I would like to offer several stories as testament to Scarlett's realized vision in growing peace amongst our children in a time of continued tumult at the national level. These two anecdotes come from second grade students in my classroom, both who very much needed to develop social-emotional competencies in order to realize their incredible potential as young learners. Self-awareness and management as well as social-awareness are competencies that these students struggle with and therefore impact the learning of all students in their classroom. Last year, there was a brilliant second grader entrusted to my care who struggled significantly with managing frustration, particularly around the area of writing. Writing time prompted hair pulling, tears, and outbursts. One day at the beginning of independent writing after our Choose Love unit on courage, I watched this student stand up, close her eyes, and assume her brave pose. She led herself through brave breaths, a mindfulness practice I had explicitly taught through the Choose Love programming, and then settled in to write a narrative rich with her sense of humor and unique voice. This may sound like a small success. But to her, this practice moved a mountain.

Or, this year, I had a student who struggled tremendously with managing emotions and enacting coping strategies that would be successful with de-escalation. After one particularly lengthy situation, this student was debriefing in the school counselor's office. The school counselor sent me a screenshot of a hand-drawn diagram of the triune brain. The student processed through her reaction utilizing the neuroscience of choosing love which we had covered months ago during our Choose Love lessons. It was a step in an empowering direction. These are just two moments, two examples I offer from a repertoire of many, many stories I have the privilege of collecting and keeping as a primary grade educator who is working through Scarlett's vision to cultivate a generation, one cohort of seven year olds at a time, who know how to enact courage, practice gratitude, forgive, and live in compassionate action.

It is necessary that as stewards of the profession, we ensure that transformative social-emotional learning practices, programming and policies reach all children. The Brock International Prize presents a wonderful opportunity to do just that in bestowing this prestigious prize upon Scarlett Lewis.

Sincerely,

Erin M. Birden

Grade 2 Teacher, Long Meadow Elementary School

Middlebury, CT 06762

(203) 648-2310

ebirden@region15.org

Resume



Scarlett Lewis

Founder and Chief Movement Officer
Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement

Profile

Scarlett is the Chief Movement Officer of the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement, a nonprofit organization founded following the murder of her 6 year old son, Jesse, at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012. A leading advocate for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in schools, the movement's signature program is now being taught in all 50 states and over 55 countries. Lewis is an international activist for peace and an award-winning speaker. Scarlett is the author of *Nurturing Healing Love*, a mother's journey of hope and forgiveness following Jesse's death.

Professional Experience

Previous to her work with the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement™, Scarlett worked in finance, trading, and real estate.

Tangoe, Inc., Executive Assistant

Shelton, CT

2010-2012

- Assisted the President, scheduling, in house professional development, events, Board of Directors.

Optimark Technologies, Relationship Manager

New York, NY

2004-2009

- Responsible for management of black box trading system for largest national buy and sell side accounts based on capital, volume, and size of firm. Cultivated and maintained excellent relationships with accounts in NY and CT regions and managed all aspects of customer relationships including technology, back office, clearing and settlement issues, training, customer service and entertainment.

Llama Company, Vice President

Fayetteville, AR

1993-1998

- Traded municipals, government agencies, mortgage backed securities and futures contracts; maintained inventory and maintained hedge using duration weighing. Investment banker cultivating municipal relationships; implemented proprietary financing strategies.

Awards and Recognitions

- *Honorary Degree*, College of Arts and Sciences, Quinnipiac University (2018)
- *Woman of Distinction*, YWCA Darien/Norwalk names (2018)
- *Multiple Stevie Awards*, Gold Stevie for Organization of the year (2017)
- *The Hero of Forgiveness Award*, International Forgiveness Alliance
- *Common Ground Award*, Search for Common Ground for peace advocacy (2015)
- *Live Your Legacy Award*, Live Your Legacy Summit

Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement
Po Box 605
Newtown, CT 06470



Published Works

Nurturing Healing Love - Written after Jesse's death, the book records Scarlett's journey of turning a personal tragedy into something that can change the world (Hay House, 2013).

Rose's Foal - A children's book about the most important lessons a mother can teach her son (BookSurge Publishing, 2009).

Sample of Public and Keynote Speaking Engagements

- ASCD Empower 18 Conference in Boston Presenter (2018)
- SXSW Education Conference Presenter (2018)
- UPENN Early Childhood Development Conference (2017)
- TEDx Fayetteville, Spoke on resiliency based on Jesse's message of Nurturing Healing Love, the algorithm for Choosing Love (2014)
- Compassionate Schools Conference, "Sandy Hook to Seattle: Building a Compassionate Schools Movement"
- Western Connecticut State University, Compassion & Creativity Conference Keynote
- Child Welfare Annual conference, "Child Welfare: Using Cross-Cutting Strategies to Empower Families and Communities"
- Dr. Wayne Dyer Conferences, "The Healing Power of Forgiveness" and "Divine Love" (2013 & 2014)
- Transformational Leadership Conference, hosted by Jack Canfield
- UPLIFT: Universal Peace & love in a Festival of Transformation with Dr. Bruce Lipton, Charles Eisenstein, Dr. Lissa Rankin, Barbara Maxwell Hubbard, Patch Adams, and others.

Workshops

- Offer "Choose Love Workshops" for educators that teach SEL concepts, neuroscience related to teaching SEL, Mindfulness and Self Care available every summer at no cost
- Created "All Calm Down" video series, bringing awareness of the negative impact of stress and anger to women and unborn babies, and offering tools to self soothe and meditation solutions
- Presented "Ceeds of Peace" workshop with Dr. Maya Soetoro-Ng on teaching invaluable skills to support children and youth to be leaders in effective peace building in their communities
- Charter for Compassion
- Presented a workshop for the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence
- 10th Annual Conference on Conflict Resolution Education

Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement
Po Box 605
Newtown, CT 06470



Achievements

- Helped to create legislation to advance life skills training that was included in the Every Child Achieves Act
- Introduced the Jesse Lewis Empowering Educators Act into US Senate alongside Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT), and Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty (D-CT)
- Collaborated with Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy who proclaimed the weeks of June 28-July 7, 2015, February 7-14, 2016 & 2017, and February 2018 as *Social and emotional Learning Awareness Weeks* in Connecticut
- Accepted a special invitation to the White House to provide input for the "National Dialogue on Mental Health"
- Met privately with Vice President Biden to discuss the role of SEL as a proactive and preventative mental health measure
- Currently working with White House to research and advance SEL nationwide

Education

Scarlett graduated from Boston University with a B.S. in Communications in 1990.

References

U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal
Tim Shriver, President Special Olympics
Dr. Christopher Kukk, Western Connecticut State University
Roger Weissberg, CASEL

Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement
Po Box 605
Newtown, CT 06470

Published Work

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR
DR. WAYNE W. DYER

NEW YORK TIMES
BEST-SELLING AUTHOR
NICK ORTNER

NURTURING HEALING LOVE



A MOTHER'S
JOURNEY OF
HOPE &
FAITH

SCARLETT
LEWIS

WITH
NICK ORTNER

Media Samples

Newtown nonprofit's message embraced in New Hampshire

nt newstimes.com/local/article/Newtown-nonprofit-s-message-embraced-in-New-13054944.php

July 7, 2018

By Rob Ryser

NEWTOWN — Scarlett Lewis believes that the negative thinking at the heart of bullying, teenage substance abuse and school violence can be transformed by teaching kids how to choose love in any circumstance.

The idea came to her after her 6-year-old son, Jesse, was massacred with 19 classmates and six educators at Sandy Hook School in 2012.

"It occurred to me that this whole tragedy happened because of a negative thought in Adam Lanza's head," said Lewis, referring to the 20-year-old shooter. "Negative thoughts can be changed into loving thoughts."

The state of New Hampshire apparently agrees.

A key recommendation in a recent report by a statewide school safety task force is to implement an emotional development curriculum promoted by Lewis' foundation, the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement.

"New Hampshire will provide a backbone of support through Scarlett's program," said New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu in a prepared statement. "We are adding these proactive and preventative measures not only for violence, but for addiction, suicide, and the toxic anxiety that has plagued our school children for too long."

New Hampshire becomes the first state to embrace the curriculum, known as social and emotional learning, or SEL. It is a decades-old concept with a body of research behind it that Lewis has been promoting in school districts across the country for several years.

The classroom program, which her foundation provides at no cost, focuses on character values of courage, gratitude, forgiveness and something Lewis calls compassion in action.

"Social and emotional learning is all about awareness and mindfulness," Lewis said on Friday. "If you think about the thoughts that go through your head you realize, 'I do have a lot of negative thoughts, and I do have a choice about what I think about.'"

The goal of the program is not only to reduce self-destructive behavior in school but to promote better attendance, improved test scores, and higher graduation rates.

By teaching students how to manage their emotions and make social connections, the program builds resilience students can use to overcome the root causes of red flag behavior in school, Lewis said.

"In the research teachers who have used social and emotional learning say that there is a sense of peace in class, because kids get along," Lewis said. "When they go out to the playground, instead of dividing up in pairs, they all play together, because they have a common language that unites the school."


New Hampshire's plan to implement the SEL program represents a big step forward for the Lewis foundation, which is among a handful of homegrown nonprofits that launched in the aftermath of the worst crime in Connecticut history.

Other nonprofits such as the gun violence prevention organizations Newtown Action Alliance and Sandy Hook Promise already have national profiles.

"This is some of our biggest news yet," Lewis said. "Now that social and emotional learning is part of the school safety dialogue, New Hampshire is the model, and the pressure will be on other states."

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Mother of murdered son chooses love to combat school mass shootings

 maui.news.com/news/local-news/2018/08/mother-of-murdered-son-chooses-love-to-combat-school-mass-shootings/

Local News

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KIHEI — Six years ago, Scarlett Lewis lost her 6-year-old son, Jesse, in the Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shooting massacre in Connecticut.

Adam Lanza killed her boy, who was full of energy and had an affinity for yellow rubber ducks and small toy military men. Lanza also murdered 19 other children and six staff members before turning the semi-automatic rifle onto himself. Earlier, he had shot and killed his 52-year-old mother, Nancy Lanza.

On Wednesday, Lewis was at Lokelani Intermediate School's band room to speak to at least 50 staff members and educators from Lokelani and other Maui schools.

"I am focused on a solution that has been proven to be effective and addresses the causes why a student would want to come into a school and harm an educator or another student, not just the effect," she said.

Mass shooters such as Adam Lanza lack social and emotional intelligence, she said.

"That's exactly what we teach," she said, of her "Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement." With the help of educators, Lewis has established school-based educational programs to change the current culture of violence to one of safety, peace and love. The programs facilitate social and emotional learning, including forgiveness and compassion.

Lokelani is the first Maui County school to implement the free curriculum of the Choose Love Enrichment Program. More than 20 schools on Oahu already are participating, said Kelley Oshiro, the Choose Love ambassador for the Pacific region.

The prekindergarten-through-12th-grade program is in all 50 states, and Washington, D.C., and more than 50 countries.

Lewis founded the movement in 2013, a year after the Dec. 14, 2012, shootings in Newtown, Conn. Jesse helped save some of his classmates by yelling "run!"

After his death, Lewis discovered that Jesse had written three words on a chalkboard at home. They were: "Nurturing. Healing. Love."

The single mother told educators that those words are not something that would come from a typical 6-year-old, but she thought Jesse had a sense his time was limited.

"It was a message of comfort for this family and friends. I knew I would be spending my whole life spreading this message," Lewis said, adding that she believes she's fulfilling Jesse's purpose in life.

The curriculum is based on courage, gratitude, forgiveness and compassion, which are part of the choose love equation.

Lewis told the audience that "everything starts with a thought." But for humans, 70 to 80 percent of our thoughts are negative, and many thoughts are repetitive.

But "the amazing thing about that is for all of us and Adam Lanza, a thought can be changed," Lewis said, adding that the Sandy Hook tragedy could have been avoided if Lanza had anger-coping skills.

"There is something we can do," she added. "This whole thing really started with an angry thought and a thought can be changed. . . . Change one angry thought to one positive thought."

Lewis said that a mother of a mass murderer had attended one of her sessions. The mother told Lewis that if her child had been part of the social and emotional learning curriculum that child would not have turned out to be a criminal.

Overall, Lewis, who also has an older teenage son, said educators and parents will have to lead the way for change because school violence is still on the rise.

When Jesse died, Lewis told herself, "This can't be the new normal. . . . Kids killing kids can't be our new normal. Five years later, I'm saying this is our new normal," she said.

She cited statistics saying that there have been more than 239 school-related shootings since the Sandy Hook incident, or one per week in the United States.

Lewis said she thought that, after her son's death, something would have been done, but by someone else.

"We live in America. We live in a civilized society. This is a one-off," she said of her thoughts after the shooting.

But she said she has realized there is no one else who will take care of the problem. Individuals, parents and teachers have to do something.

And teachers at Lokelani embraced the message.

Teachers Jaclynn Phillips and Stephanie Kamake'e'aina, who are part of the "Choose Love Cadre," a group at the school that is helping put together the program for other staff members, said they're excited and energized to take part in the yearlong program.

"It has to start somewhere, why not with us?" said Kamake'e'aina, who teaches 7th-grade science.

"Maybe once we do it for a year, the other schools in Maui will do it," chimed in Phillips, who teaches 6th- and 7th-grade math.

Asked whether students may benefit from the program, Phillips said that every student and every adult in the school will benefit.

Student activities coordinator Cathy Fitzpatrick said the curriculum will be taught in each homeroom during the advisory period.

Fitzpatrick said she went to Oahu and observed the Choose Love Movement being used "with great success" at Kaelepulu Elementary School.

The program was brought to Kihei because Lokelani was looking for a strong social emotional learning curriculum.

"We want to be proactive and address the needs of the whole child," she said.

Five Years After Sandy Hook Shooting, Social And Emotional Learning Programs Thrive In Schools

wnpr.org/post/five-years-after-sandy-hook-shooting-social-and-emotional-learning-programs-thrive-schools

By David DesRoches



Kindergarten students in Amanda Finch's class at Classical Studies Magnet Academy discuss their feelings during a morning check-in.

Justin Rosa wasn't doing so great when he first moved to Connecticut from Florida in eighth grade.

"That process alone was very difficult, losing all my friends, having to start over, it was such a hard time for me," he said. "I was very depressed."

The once-outgoing kid began to retreat into his own head. And that's when the thoughts began.

"To be alone was such a... a scary point in my life," he said. "I thought that I would have committed suicide. And it wasn't until the Choose Love Foundation that everything changed."

That foundation was started by Scarlett Lewis, whose son, Jesse, was murdered at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012.

"They gave me an outlet to understand the importance of helping people," Rosa said. He began to feel a purpose in life. He's now a freshman in college, studying to be a social worker.

The Jesse Lewis Choose Love Foundation has a simple goal -- to encourage people to choose love over fear, and compassion over anger. To do that, Lewis assembled a group of educators and mental health professionals to create a free social and emotional learning program for teachers to use in the classroom.

Lewis said she's certain that the shooter, Adam Lanza, never would have murdered 26 people that day if he had received social and emotional support in school.

"Social and emotional learning is the most proactive and preventative mental health initiative there is," Lewis said.

Scarlett Lewis displays a quilt made by people from around the world, and given to her after her son was killed at Sandy Hook School in 2012.

Credit WNPR/David DesRoches

Her program has been downloaded by over 300 schools and organizations in the state, she said. And it's also being used by schools in 46 states and 29 countries. When she travels speaking about her foundation, there's always a painful dichotomy present -- she's able to so much good, but only because her son was killed.

"Gosh, would I give it all back in a second, just to be able to touch Jesse again, I would, but I can't, and, so, I'm left with gratitude for what I have," she said.

In the months following the Sandy Hook shooting, state mental health officials dove into Lanza's mind. One of their key findings was that the public school district did little to address Lanza's deteriorating mental health. Now schools have begun to teach social skills and emotional awareness, with the hope that kids will learn how to cope with stress and anger, and avoid the sort of spiral that Lanza fell into.

Since that day, social and emotional learning programs have taken off in schools around the country. One of those schools is Bridgeport's Classical Studies Magnet Academy.

On a Monday morning, Amanda Finch's kindergarten students are talking about their feelings.

"Think about how you're feeling this morning, we're going to do our morning circle, you're going to tell me how you're feeling and why," Finch said to her students.

Each child has just placed a stick into a color-coded can. Each color is associated with a feeling. Blue for sad, red for angry, yellow for happy, green for calm. For kids who aren't feeling so great, Finch will probe a little. But the real digging happens once they all sit in a circle.

Today, a lot of kids are happy because the first snow of the winter fell over the weekend. Others, like Gianna Morant, are upset.

"I'm sad because I miss my mom and I didn't get to say goodbye to her," she said.

At the end of the morning check-in, Finch asks the kids how they help their sad or angry classmates. They tell her things like, "give them a hug" or "make them a car" or "play with them outside."

All of this is part of a program called RULER. It was developed by the [Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence](#) to help schools teach social and emotional skills. Marc Brackett is the center's director.


"What research now shows is that schools that adopt these practices have students who make better choices, they have students who have less stress, have greater well-being, and students who actually perform better academically, both in grades, and in standardized test scores," Brackett said.

A few years ago, the universities of Loyola and Illinois [looked at over 200 studies](#) involving over 270,000 students. They found that strong social and emotional learning programs had pretty big impacts on all aspects of kids' lives.

"They've followed kids throughout their life that have had social and emotional learning in kindergarten, all the way through adulthood," Lewis said. "They have less substance abuse, less mental illness of all kinds, less incarceration, they're more likely to get a job, they're more likely to graduate from college. It's almost like the panacea -- If it were a vaccine, we would line everyone up on the planet and give it to them. That's how many benefits there are."

Advocates have pointed out that the challenge is getting people to buy in. American culture isn't too keen on dealing with emotions. Lewis said all it takes is a little courage to see that there is a better way. With mass shootings [happening every single day in this country](#), she said the time for that courage is now.

Sandy Hook mom's school program pitched for expansion in Arkansas

 nwaonline.com/news/2018/aug/06/sandy-hook-mom-s-school-program-pitched/

By Ashton Eley

August 6, 2018

FAYETTEVILLE -- School officials are considering expanding a social and emotional learning program districtwide as part of safety and security efforts.

Incorporating the Choose Love Enrichment Program in every school is one of many recommendations made by the Fayetteville Safety and Security Task Force to the School Board last month.

If the board approves changes, Superintendent John L. Colbert said the program likely will be implemented next school year after faculty training is completed.

Scarlett Lewis founded the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Foundation and has worked with educators, researchers and others to create the program. She began her work after her 6-year-old son, Jesse, was killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012. She said she realized school shootings were a societal problem.

"Everything I do, I do as much for my son and other victims as I do for the perpetrators, because there is no mass-murder gene," Lewis said. "People like to think it's a snap, because that takes us off the hook. 'How can you prevent a snap?' But it's never a snap; it's a slow, steady burn of pain, neglect, abuse, anxiety, disconnection, lack of resilience, lack of ability to manage emotion."

The pre-K through 12th-grade program began in 2016 in schools around the country, including George Elementary School in Springdale and Washington Elementary School in Fayetteville. Other schools in both districts adopted the program last school year.

The program focuses on four values -- courage, gratitude, forgiveness and compassion in action -- which cultivate optimism, resilience and personal responsibility through positive psychology, mindfulness, neuroscience and other elements, Lewis said.

The one thing everyone can control is how they react to a situation, she said, and that's a very empowering thing to teach a child.

The goal is to effectively learn and apply the character skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.

Anxiety in children can begin by the time a child is 6 years old, and anxiety can lead to emotional and mental health problems, substance abuse and violence, Lewis said. The Sandy Hook Advisory Report, released after the shootings, recommended three areas for prevention: gun safety, increased access to mental health treatment, and social and emotional learning.

Social and emotional learning and the research to back it up have been around for more than 30 years, Lewis said.

Many studies found how character skills formed in early childhood lead to necessary social and emotional skills for success in school and beyond. For example, a 20-year study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* in 2015 evaluated the character skills of 800 kindergartners and followed them until age 25. For every one-point increase in children's character skills scores in kindergarten, they were 54 percent more likely to graduate from high school, twice as likely to earn a college degree and 46 percent more likely to have a full-time job at age 25.

One of the positive impacts of the program is that it creates a common language with which teachers, students and parents can talk about emotions, said Tara Lechtenberger, a counselor at Washington Elementary School.

"Not only are we using the curriculum, but we are creating a Choose Love culture," she said. "Parents have told me they are using the skills because the students are teaching the parents to breathe when they are angry, for example, which I love."

Lechtenberger said she thinks the program will continue to expand at Washington to where teachers are using the program more. She's excited at the possibility of it being used districtwide.

"It's really essential these kids learn these skills so when they find themselves in difficult situations, they know what to do. That's what I love: It's very practical. These are real skills," she said. "The Choose Love culture and curriculum is a component of school safety. It's not the answer; it's part of the answer."

Teachers do a great job of connecting with the students, but kids don't always connect with kids, said Janelle Harp, school counselor at

Sonora Elementary School in Springdale. She has seen a positive change since implementing the Choose Love program into her guidance lessons last year.

"Through this program, I think the biggest thing is that they are learning to connect with each other in positive ways," she said. "They are not going to feel as isolated and disconnected. It is going to take some time, but I have definitely seen a shift and change in kids -- not that they are all best friends, but they have been nicer and kinder to each other."

The program complements a conscious discipline teachers at her school have been trained in, Harp said. Conscious discipline teaches classroom management and uses similar language and concepts of self-regulation as Choose Love, she said.

"For me, Choose Love and conscious discipline are so powerful to have together," Harp said.

In school districts in Northwest Arkansas, social and emotional learning and similar programs are implemented school-to-school based on the culture of that school, counselors said.

Tucker Elementary School in Lowell is considering the Choose Love Program, counselor Amanda Scoggin said, because of its focus on how students struggle with anxiety and how they can better relate to each other.

Bentonville Public Schools also uses a couple of different social-emotional learning programs, communications director Leslee Wright said.

"We're currently in the process of evaluating a number of others, including Choose Love, that we will implement across the district at the right time," Wright said.

The program is free, and the materials are accessible online.

"There are a lot of programs out there. They are all great. They all teach the important skills kids need to know, but I was, first, intrigued at the story behind why Scarlett started the program, and then I looked at the curriculum," Lechtenberger said. "I thought it had a mindfulness component that I felt was current and fresh. I thought the kids would really respond to the way this curriculum teaches these skills."

The program has been downloaded in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and 55 countries by 3,300 educators. The foundation estimates these educators reach about 500,000 students, according to its website.

Program Overview



Choose Love Movement





PROGRAM Overview

Subject

THE CHOOSE LOVE MOVEMENT

My name is Scarlett Lewis, and I'm the founder of the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement. This initiative started with three words written on a kitchen chalkboard by my six-year-old son, Jesse McCord Lewis, on the morning of December 14, 2012. He wrote, "nurturing, healing, love." He was murdered later that day, alongside 19 of his classmates and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. His message constitutes a powerful formula for choosing love.



The Jesse Lewis Choose Love Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization committed to reaching students, educators, and individuals, both nationally and internationally, with a simple, yet profound formula for choosing love. Our signature program uses "nurturing, healing, love" as a foundation for learning and for life. Learn more about the foundation on its website: www.jesselewischooselove.org

WHY THIS CURRICULUM MATTERS

Choosing love means having the courage to be grateful when life isn't easy, to forgive when the person who hurt you isn't sorry, and to step outside your own pain to help someone else. That's the way to choose love, and the empowering lesson is that it's a choice.

Almost half of our young people will have a diagnosable mental illness by the time they are 18 years old ("Child Mind Institute," 2016). The most common diagnosis will be anxiety, and the majority will not get professional help, as children today are under more stress than children of previous generations (Bluth & Blanton, 2014). The average onset age for anxiety is six years old, and in our country these children often suffer alone. The long-term effects of anxiety are mental illness, substance abuse, anger, violence, and incarceration (Harbaugh & Vasey, 2014). It's not a mystery why we are seeing the issues we have in schools and in our society. There is a solution... teaching children to choose love.

Children who feel connected, who are resilient, and who can reciprocate love won't want to harm each other (Garney, 2016). We can teach children to choose love. Love is a universal need, the lack of which can be devastating. That's why I started the Choose Love Movement.



THE MISSION OF THE CHOOSE LOVE FOUNDATION

The Jesse Lewis Choose Love Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization with a commitment to reach students, educators and individuals, nationally and internationally, and provide them with a simple, yet profound formula for choosing love. Our signature program uses Jesse's three words as a foundation for learning and for life.

THE CHOOSE LOVE ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

The Choose Love Enrichment Program is a Pre-K through 12th grade curriculum that emphasizes the simple, universal teachings of courage, gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion in action.

The lessons are divided into these four units which create a formula for choosing love:

The Choose Love Formula is:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Courage} \\ + & \text{Gratitude} \\ + & \text{Forgiveness} \\ + & \text{Compassion} \\ & \text{in Action} \\ & \text{(including service to others)} \\ \hline = & \text{choosing love!} \end{aligned}$$



The Choose Love Formula teaches the foundational concepts and skills of social and emotional learning (SEL), and is informed by current brain research and neuroscience. The program fuses SEL with Character Education, Mindfulness, Positive Psychology, Emotional Intelligence, and Neuroscience. The goal of the **Choose Love Enrichment Program** is to provide children with the knowledge, attitude, and skills they need to choose love in any situation.

These abilities include:

- Understanding and managing emotions (self-awareness and self-management),
- Setting and achieving positive goals,
- Feeling and showing empathy and compassion for others (social awareness),
- Establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and
- Making responsible decisions.

More information about the benefits of SEL can be found on the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) website: www.casel.org. An overview of the neuroscience used to develop this program can be found at the end of this section.

THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING AND TEACHING SEL

“Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (casel.org). It is based in the idea that rich and meaningful learning occurs when people are engaged in positive and supporting relationships.

Over 30 years of research substantiates the benefits of social and emotional learning (SEL), (“CASEL: What is SEL,” 2016). It lays the groundwork for academic learning and responsible citizenship. SEL has been proven to increase grades, attendance, and focus, while reducing aggression, anxiety, substance abuse, and other issues (“CASEL: What is SEL,” 2016). SEL has a critical role in improving children’s academic performance and lifelong learning (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg & Walberg, 2004). Children who are aware of their emotions and have good planning skills by the time they enter school are also at lower risk for problems with aggression and anxiety disorders (Greenberg, Kusch, & Mihalic, 1998).

Students aren’t the only ones who benefit from SEL. Schools are challenged by teacher attrition and unsafe learning environments (“CASEL: What is SEL,” 2016). When educators teach SEL, they help students create safe, loving, and healthy problem-solving communities that enhance teachers’ ability to teach as well as students’ ability to learn (CASEL: Outcomes Associated with Five Competencies, 2016).



SEL is the best way to cultivate a safe classroom and school climate. SEL gives children the tools and skills to manage emotions, to be confident and resilient in the face of adversity, to make positive and pro social choices, and to have healthy relationships and deep, meaningful connections. Now more than ever, we must create such safe school learning environments where children feel secure, where they are nurtured, where they are empowered and where they can thrive.

Teachers who are trained and teach SEL have cited the following benefits:

(http://www.creducation.org/cre/home/about_us/about_crete)

- Increased confidence in teachers' ability to handle conflict (among students, peers and families)
- Increased teachers' positive attitude toward teaching
- Increased teachers' perception that they are ready to teach about problem-solving, critical thinking, listening/communication skills, and conflict escalation.
- Increased teachers' perception that they are prepared to implement classroom management strategies: have students help and enforce rules, teach conflict strategies, and use cooperative learning.

UNITS

Lessons are flexible, educator-friendly, and allow for creativity- and fun. Lessons can be taught by teachers, counselors, or social workers (and trained volunteers). It is encouraged that all work together to maximize the impact of the program through using consistent language.

The lessons were written for educators, by educators, and are research-based. The content of the lessons is based on research on emotional intelligence, resilience, post-traumatic growth, neuroscience, mindfulness/focused attention, and SEL. Special attention is paid to how our physical bodies (nerves, muscles, etc.), minds (the triune brain), and hearts (emotions) work in collaboration to promote health, learning, connection, and life success. The whole child—mind, heart, and body—is supported through these lessons. There are four units: Courage, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Compassion.

Through these four units the following competencies are taught:

- Self-Awareness: recognizing one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and limitations;
- Self- Management: managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals;
- Social Awareness: showing understanding and empathy for others;
- Relationship Skills: forming positive relationships, working in teams,



- dealing effectively with conflict;
- **Responsible Decision-Making:** making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior.

courage

Courage is the willingness and ability to work through obstacles despite feeling embarrassment, fear, reluctance, or uncertainty (Martinez, 2015). When you practice courage, you make positive choices even when it may be difficult for you. It takes courage to express our feelings, make ethical choices, tell the truth, admit mistakes, ask for forgiveness, and to be kind. This is especially true when others might not be leading by example. **Courage requires self-awareness and self-regulation (Greenberg, 2016).** Students practice identifying feelings in themselves and others. The “courage” exercises assist students in learning how to help their brains regulate the amygdala by activating the prefrontal cortex (Martinez, 2015).

gratitude

Students learn that gratitude is mindful thankfulness and the ability to be thankful even when things in life are challenging. When you practice gratitude you feel thankful and want to share that feeling with others (Donaldson, Dollwet & Rao, 2014). Research has shown that the benefits associated with gratitude include better sleep patterns, increased levels of happiness and optimism, a sense of connection to peers and communities, and decreased levels of anxiety and stress (J. Psychosom Res. 2009; Donaldson, Dollwet & Rao, 2014). Gratitude influences sleep through the mechanism of pre-sleep cognitions. These benefits have positive impacts in the lives of students, and they help cultivate safe and thriving classroom cultures. **“Gratitude” exercises help students become actively thankful for everyday situations and opportunities (Lomas, Froh, Emmons, Mishra & Bono, 2014).** The act of being thankful helps release dopamine, which not only makes students feel good but is also a key neurotransmitter for learning (Wiss, 2014).



forgiveness

Forgiveness means choosing to let go of anger and resentment toward yourself or someone else, to surrender thoughts of revenge, and to move forward with your personal power intact. **Forgiveness** has been shown to **improve relationships, decrease anxiety and stress, lower blood pressure, lower the risk of depression, and strengthen immune and heart health.** Letting go of negative emotions can often have a remarkable impact on one's physical, mental and emotional health (Chiaramello, Mesnil, Sastre, & Mullet 2008). Students also learn how to forgive themselves if they've made a mistake, caused an accident, or hurt someone as a result of their actions (Thompson & Waltz, 2008). Students learn healthy ways to express anger and to calm themselves down. They also learn how their brains and bodies respond to anger. They practice listening skills to support each other when they feel angry or are having strong emotions.

compassion in action

Compassion has two components: the first is empathy, which means putting yourself in someone else's shoes and trying to feel what that person feels, and the second is action, which means helping someone in need and performing acts of kindness without expecting anything in return. **Compassion is when one understands how another person feels and takes action to alleviate that person's suffering.** Students apply their empathy and communication skills to support one another through compassionate action. Humans are wired for connection and compassion. The activities help students make choices that benefit their minds, hearts, bodies, and relationships.



LESSON BREAKDOWN FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In each unit you will find:

- A Unit Overview summarizing the content of the unit.
- 4-6 lessons based on the theme of the unit.
- A list of student objectives for that unit.
- A Family Focus and Connection section that provides ideas for how to engage family members and caregivers in learning and reinforcing the unit's concepts and skills.
- A Make Your Move section that provides tips and ideas for how to leverage your teacher leadership and integrate the skills into classroom and school culture.

There are 17-20 lessons for the Elementary School Program, depending on grade level. Lessons are designed to be taught in sequence, and vary in teaching time from 20 to 45 minutes based on grade level. For example, there are 18 lessons in the 2nd Grade Program. At a pace of one lesson per week, the curriculum can be incorporated for 18 weeks. Additional activities are provided to help keep the program going all year long, and ensure that it becomes part of your classroom vernacular.

In each lesson, you will find the following sections: **Student Objectives, Educator Preparation, Focused Awareness, Discussion, Activity, and Transfer of Learning.** The **Student Objectives** section will tell you what the students will be able to do following the lesson. This will help you focus on why the lesson is being taught, and why it's important for students. The **Educator Preparation** section will tell you what materials or resources you need to gather before the lesson.

The Focused Awareness section provides skills that are designed to help students increase their readiness to learn and improve their emotion management. It includes the following three skills: Breath (diaphragmatic breathing), Rest and Relax (mindful relaxation of the body), and Reflection (Garland, Farb, Goldin & Fredrickson, 2015).

These skills help students:

- Increase their awareness of emotions,
- Manage their feelings when appropriate, and
- Regulate their feelings in the moment.

Educators can help students adopt these skills by modeling, coaching, and cueing students frequently. At first, younger students may find it difficult to focus their attention through this section, but with practice they'll lengthen the amount of time they're able to remain still, calm, and attentive.

The **Discussion** section provides an easy-to-use script for you to read aloud. It guides students through a discussion of the lesson contents. The **Activity** section provides students with opportunities to practice what they've learned. The **Transfer of Learning** section gives ideas on how to reinforce what students learned in the lesson.



LESSON BREAKDOWN FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Middle School Program has very similar content to the Elementary School Program in that students learn the Choose Love Formula, with a unit on Courage, Gratitude, Forgiveness, and Compassion in Action. However, the Middle School Program is laid out very differently from the Elementary School to better fit with the Middle School Schedule. **It is designed to be started as close to the beginning of the school year as possible in order that the whole program be completed by the end of the school year.**

Lessons are shorter so that they may be easily plugged in during homeroom or advisory periods, or woven into a regular class period. On Day 1, which is the first day of the week, there is a Brain Blast which is usually 20 minutes long. This can be shortened or lengthened, depending on time available.

This **Brain Blast** introduces the main concepts/content being taught for that week. There are 7 Brain Blasts for each of the 4 Units, **Courage-Gratitude-Forgiveness-Compassion in Action**. Therefore, the idea is that each Character Trait Unit will last 7 weeks.

After the Day 1 Brain Blast, each day of the rest of the week, we have provided Power Surges. These are designed to be mini blasts of learning to support, supplement, and reinforce the Brain Blast from Day 1. The activities are short, lasting about 10-15 minutes, but can be lengthened as time permits. There are 140 lessons for your use. If you can't teach all in the way intended, that's fine. You can teach the Brain Blasts and then select the Power Surges that best meet the needs of your students.

Each character trait unit has:

- 7 Brain Blasts (1 per week)
- 28 Power Surges (4 per week)
- Alignment to: Common Core State Standards and American School Counselor Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success

Each Week of each Character Trait Unit has:

- 1 Brain Blast
- 4 Power Surges
- Student Objectives for the week
- Social and Emotional Learning Skills Noted
- Social Media Message



LESSON BREAKDOWN FOR HIGH SCHOOL

In each of the High School lessons you will find the following sections: Student Objectives, Educator Preparation, Activity, Social Media Share, SEL Skills Practice, and Reinforcing Learning. The lessons are designed to be taught in sequence, and vary in teaching time from 5-10 minutes. There are 180 total lessons in the High School Program, 45 lessons in each of the 4 units. At a pace of one short lesson per day, students will have frequent opportunity to practice attitudinal and behavioral change.

The **Student Objectives** section will tell you what the students will be able to do following the lesson. This will help you focus on why the lesson is being taught, and why it's important for students. The **Educator Preparation** section will tell you what materials or resources you need to gather before the lesson. The lessons themselves are very low prep because we know teachers have enough on their plate. Since using examples and scenarios that are relevant to your students help make the program more effective, most of the preparation suggests coming up with skill-based examples that will be meaningful to your students.

The **Activity** section offers scripts for discussion, games, reflection and activities. The **Social Media Share** section provides ideas for how students can extend and relate the lesson concepts online. We call out the specific SEL skills being used in the **SEL Skills Practice** section, and offer additional tips and teaching strategies for helping new skills stick with students in the **Reinforcing Learning** section.

Standards

The Choose Love Enrichment Program is aligned to the following standards:

- Early Learning and Development Standards
- Common Core State Standards
- American School Counselor Association Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success
- 5 Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies associated with CASEL.



WHO'S THE BOSS? THINKING ABOUT THE BRAIN, FOR KIDS & EDUCATORS



The Triune Brain

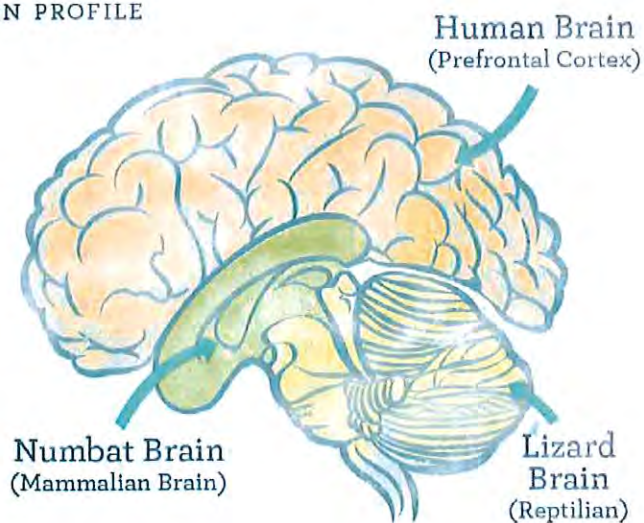
Written by Dr. Chris Kukk, author of *The Compassionate Achiever*

We're going to use the model of the brain developed by Dr. Paul D. MacLean to explain—in the simplest and most efficient manner possible—the neuroscience behind the Choose Love Enrichment Program. Dr. MacLean's model is called the triune brain, and it divides the brain into three sections (see the figure below) (MacLean, 1967; Newman & Harris, 2009). Although it is an oversimplified model, it represents the basic workings of the brain. The triune model provides a way to explain these basics so that every child can understand how thinking (ideas and thoughts) and behavior (actions and words) are connected.

The three interconnected brain sections of the triune model include: 1) reptilian (brainstem and cerebellum), 2) mammalian (limbic system), and 3) primate-human (neocortex).

The three brain sections of the triune model, which are interconnected, include: (1) reptilian (brain stem and cerebellum), (2) mammalian (limbic system) and (3) the primate-human (neocortex).

BRAIN PROFILE



The Reptilian Brain

The reptilian brain is responsible for the body's vital functions, such as breathing, heart rate, and body temperature (MacLean, 1967). This part of the brain helps us stay alert and reactive to the environment around us. It controls our balance, coordination, and reflexes, and it never sleeps (Strick, Dum, & Fiez, 2009). Think of the reptilian brain taking control when the doctor taps your knee and your leg instinctively kicks; it reacts quickly, without thinking. We call the reptilian brain "the lizard."

The Mammalian Brain

The mammalian brain is responsible for our social and emotional behaviors, as well as our quick value judgments (positive or negative) (MacLean, 1967). It is buried deep inside the brain and is sometimes considered the "heart of the brain." It is the part of the brain where many neurochemicals are produced, such as oxytocin, dopamine, and cortisol (Bujis & Swaab, 1979; Brownstein, Saavedra, & Palkovits, 1974; Dedovic, Duchesne, Andrews, Engert, & Pruessner, 2009). It strongly influences our initial behavior when we experience something (music, art, and even a smell), and it can make us feel as though we're riding an emotional roller coaster (Brown, Martinez, & Parsons, 2004). We call the mammalian brain "the numbat."

The Primate-Human Brain

The primate-human brain is responsible for imagination, thought, planning, and decision-making (MacLean, 1967). It's the part of the brain that helps us develop language and it has infinite learning capabilities (McClellan, McNaughton, & O'Reilly, 1995). It helps us make rational, cognitive, and common-sense decisions (Gifford, 2002). When we use this part of our brain, it acts as a brake on our reflexive and instinctual reactions; it is the source of self-control. We call the primate-human brain "the human."

Who's the boss? In other words, which part of your brain is influencing your behavior? By understanding how the lizard, numbat and human brains function, we can learn which of them is informing our choices at any given moment.



We make the choice of who (lizard, numbat, or human) controls our actions in every situation. When we encounter situations that excite us in either a positive or negative way, we can choose which part of the brain controls our response (Hariri, Bookheimer, & Mazziotta, 2000). Let's take an angry feeling as an example. When we become angry, that feeling feeds the numbat part of our brain (the limbic system) by sending blood and oxygen to it. We have a choice as to how we deal with the awakened numbat. The first is to send the angry numbat up to the human so that it is handled in a reasonable and rational way (we call this "hugging the human"). When we slow down and think about the anger, we are engaging, or hugging, our human brain. The second choice is to send the numbat's oxygen down to the lizard so that we feed our primitive and reactionary reptilian brain. In other words, we can nudge the numbat to either hug the human or feed the lizard. The Jesse Lewis Choose Love Foundation wants to help everyone learn how to leave the lizard, and to nudge the numbat toward hugging the human.

The Choose Love Enrichment Program uses a three-step motto to help students learn about the brain science of social and emotional development: leave the lizard, nudge the numbat, and hug the human.

(FUN NOTE: the initials of our social and emotional learning motto—LNH—are the same as Jesse's chalkboard message to his mom...love, nurturing, healing.)

Courage

Courage is about overcoming learned fear and learned fear mainly occurs in the brain's amygdala. The amygdala is the brain's sentinel; it is on the lookout for threats and it reacts without thinking. The "courage" exercises assist students in learning how to help their brains to regulate the amygdala by activating the prefrontal cortex. The exercises engage the prefrontal cortex (specifically the right ventrolateral prefrontal cortex), which is commonly referred to as the brain's 'brake pedal.' The exercises seek to increase serotonin and decrease cortisol levels.

Gratitude

The more gratitude a person shows, the more active the brain's hypothalamus becomes. While the hypothalamus controls various bodily functions such as drinking, eating and sleeping, it plays a significant role in a student's metabolism and stress levels. The "gratitude" exercises help students to become actively thankful for the kindness around them. The act of being thankful helps to release dopamine, which not only makes a student feel good but is also a key neurotransmitter for learning.



Forgiveness

To forgive is to activate a neural network connecting different regions of the brain. To forgive is literally and figuratively a coming together, both in the brain and behavior. The brain network of forgiveness mainly includes the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, precuneus and the inferior parietal lobule. The neural activation of this 'forgiveness network' results in a personal sense of relief or what Scarlett calls "cutting the umbilical cord of anger and resentment." The Choose Love Movement exercises on "forgiveness" seek to increase endorphin levels (GABA, DHEA, serotonin and melatonin) while reducing cortisol. Forgiveness is another way of feeling what is called the "runner's high."

Compassion

From Charles Darwin to modern neuroscience research, scientists have found that human beings are wired for compassion. When a person thinks in a compassionate way they activate the neurochemistry of kindness, which begins with the release of the peptide hormone oxytocin. Oxytocin then activates dopamine and serotonin, which contribute to a person feeling happy and optimistic. The neuro keys of compassion are the vagus nerve (sometimes called the nerve of compassion and it gives us the feeling of 'warm fuzzies'), the inferior parietal cortex, the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, the hypothalamus and the nucleus accumbens. The "compassion" exercises seek to activate the neuro-dominoes of compassion, beginning with oxytocin.



HOW TO GET STARTED WITH THE CHOOSE LOVE ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

1

Log on to the website!

www.jesselewischooselove.org

2

Register to use the program!

All we need is some basic information to keep track of who is using the program and to keep in touch with you!

3

Create a login!

Once you create a login you can easily download all materials which includes the Choose Love Enrichment Program as well as a wealth of supplementary resources! You can return anytime you want to access more materials.

4

Access your lessons!

Have fun exploring all of the free resources we have for you. Start by looking at the curriculum and reading the Educator Manual which will give you all the nice to know and need to know info and nuts and bolts to get started.

5

Check out our website!

While you are on our website take a look around to learn more about the Choose Love Organization and Movement, stay updated, and learn more about Social and Emotional Learning. We encourage you to sign on to follow us on social media which you can do from the website!



Brochure and At-a-Glance



“Choosing love saved my life. My teacher taught us the act of taking all the grudges, hate, and negative thoughts out of our system and to learn to cooperate, learn to forgive, and most importantly, she taught us how to choose love.”

~Justin Rosa, high school student, CT

“Truly humbled. Especially for the opportunity to teach my kids the importance of choosing love over fear and anger. I’m incredibly grateful to have such amazing, resilient, mindful students who have dedicated themselves to spreading Jesse’s message by sharing how his courage has helped heal some of their own struggles.”

~Krislynn Petti, high school teacher, CT

“Not only is the Choose Love program easy to teach but the kids enjoy it as well.”

~Tara Lechtenberger, elementary school counselor, KY

I can’t begin to explain how amazing the teaching of “Choose Love” is for my children. My child has been explaining all about the human brain, belly breaths and courage at 7 years old! I am in awe. As a parent, I always ask myself, “Will this lesson really matter in ten years?” I know this will!

~Parent, Darien CT

Choose Love™ Enrichment Program

A PROGRAM FOR EDUCATORS BY EDUCATORS

The Choose Love Enrichment Program™ was developed by leading educators, Social and Emotional Learning experts and child psychologists.

Program Fast Facts:

- A NO COST comprehensive Pre-K to Grade 12 curriculum
- Teaches Students how to Choose Love For Themselves and Others
- Aligned with Casel.org’s Core SEL Competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making
- Character Education Based including Emotional Intelligence, Positive Psychology and Mindfulness
- Aligned with Common Core State Standards
- Aligned with American School Counselor Association Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success
- The Power of Choice, Presence and our Thoughts
- Designed by Educators for Educators
- Access to a multitude of resources that go beyond lesson plans
- Simplified neuroscience lessons illustrating the mind/body connection
- Based on scientific proven methods to cultivate a happy, healthy, meaningful life

Educators can sign up to receive FREE grade appropriate tools by visiting:

JESSELEWISCHOOSELOVE.ORG



“I created the formula for choosing love based on the three words written by my son Jesse on our chalkboard, ‘Nurturing Healing Love’.

These words are in the definition of compassion across all cultures.

I added courage for Jesse, to honor the bravery he showed us not just that day but every day.

This formula is the basis of the program and the message is woven throughout all the lessons.”

Scarlett Lewis

Mother of Jesse, victim of the 2012 Sandy Hook tragedy
 Founder, *Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement*
 Advocate for *Social and Emotional Learning*
 Author of *“Nurturing Healing Love”* and *“Rose’s Foe!”*



WWW.JESSELEWISCHOOSELOVE.ORG
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INSTAGRAM.COM/JLCHOOSELOVE

COURAGE
 + GRATITUDE
 + FORGIVENESS
 + COMPASSION
in Action



THE CHOOSE LOVE FORMULA

The Program includes a powerful formula for Choosing Love - comprised of these character values: **courage, gratitude, forgiveness and compassion-in-action** — that can be used in any situation to promote personal empowerment, resilience, connection, and compassion.

Learning these core values helps students achieve academic and personal success through: better self-awareness and management skills, social awareness, improved relationship skills, responsible decision-making skills, enhanced self-control, and positive intention.

The **Choose Love EnrichmentProgram™** is a NO COST Pre-K through Grade 12 social and emotional learning (SEL) program teaching children how to choose love in any circumstance.

Join our commitment to the importance of teaching children core competencies and skills, beyond academics, that can help them thrive emotionally, mentally, personally and socially.

SEL is a proactive and preventative mental health initiative that has been proven to reduce anxiety, addiction and behavioral issues while increasing student performance, physical and emotional well-being.

SEL is the best way to cultivate a safe classroom and school climate. SEL gives children the tools and skills to manage emotions, to be confident and resilient in the face of adversity, to make positive and pro social choices, and to have healthy relationships and deep, meaningful connections. Now more than ever, we must create such safe school learning environments where children feel secure, where they are nurtured, where they are empowered and where they can thrive.

Educators can sign up to receive grade appropriate tools at NO COST by visiting:
www.JesseLewisChooseLove.org



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 Newtown, CT 06470

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www.JesseLewisChooseLove.org

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Create Safer Schools
 and a More
 Peaceful World by
 Teaching Children to

Choose
 LOVE



**Choose Love
 Enrichment Program™**

NO COST Pre-K—Grade 12
 Social and Emotional Learning Program

JESSELEWISCHOOSELOVE.ORG

Jesse Lewis
Choose Love
Enrichment Program™

Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement's Signature Program



At a Glance

- Free online PK-12th Grade Program that can be downloaded directly from our website at www.jesselewischooselove.org
- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum which fuses SEL with Character Education, Positive Psychology, Mindfulness, Neuroscience, and Emotional Intelligence.
- Created by Educators for Educators. Counselors, Teachers, Psychologists, and Professors wrote and created this comprehensive program.
- Aligned with Common Core State Standards, American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success, and CASEL's five Core SEL Competencies.
- In addition to the program, Educators have free access to a wealth of Supplementary Resources including an Educator Guide, Mindfulness Extension Lessons, Morning Meeting Infusion Activities, Worksheets, Bookmarks, Posters and other printables, and videos.
- Comprehensive Units including: Lesson Concepts, Standards, Objectives, Materials needed, and Teacher Scripts.
- Students learn the Choose Love Formula:
Courage + Gratitude + Forgiveness + Compassion in Action = Choosing Love Formula
- The Choose Love Formula can be used in any situation to promote self-empowerment, resilience, connection, and optimism.
- Differentiated by Grade Level, Flexible/ Educator Friendly Lesson Plans with learned skills that can be applied across the Academic Curriculum.
- A major message in the Program is 'We can't always choose what happens to us, but we can always choose how we respond.' Students learn the skills to make healthy, positive, loving choices.
- Students learn the Three Parts of the Brain: Lizard, Numbat, and Human. They also learn the Three Step Motto: Leave the Lizard, Nudge the Numbat to Hug the Human. They understand that they can choose their thoughts and their responses.
- Students gain awareness of the benefits related to each Core Value (Courage, Gratitude, Forgiveness, and Compassion in Action) which encourages them to be guided by and demonstrate these traits in their thoughts and actions.